11-1-1965

The Opinion - Vol. 05, No. 02

Fuller Theological Seminary

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FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

the opinion

Vol. V, No. 2 November, 1965

SOME THOUGHTS ON SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

by David Allan Hubbard

For those of us who witnessed at close quarters the tragically destructive social explosion in the Watts district this summer there can be no question: We can no longer afford to sit complacently concerned; the screaming need for social justice in our society demands that our concern find outlet in social involvement.

One of the key questions forced upon seminaries by contemporary history is, 'What, according to the Bible, is the relation of the mission of the Church to the social needs of humanity?' One certain principle in answer is that our Lord did not proclaim a ghetto theology of the Church, but taught that it must extend its arm of love and mercy to touch every area of human need.

Without wresting verses of Scripture from context and applying them in a completely alien situation, it still remains clear that the spirit of the Bible would have us act out against contemporary forms of immorality and injustice. Christian love issues in social concern. Our doctrine of creation tells us that all men are made in the image of God; our doctrine of redemption teaches us that Christ took on human flesh and involved himself in the human predicament, except for sin. Therefore, evangelical theology insists that wherever people are not being treated as people, protest must be made. The prophet Amos speaks with as clear a voice to the Church in 1965 as to the people of his own time when he warns us to '...let justice roll on like a mighty river, and integrity flow like a never-failing stream.' (Amos 5:24)

We know that morality cannot be legislated. America's 'prohibition' experience showed how futile it is to legislate against the wishes of the majority. Even so, law can provide some measure of protection for society from the foolishness or selfishness of less thoughtful members. Law does have a legitimate restraining function. Speed laws don't erase recklessness, but they do serve to curb it.

The ultimate solution to problems of social injustice can only be found in a society of 'New Beings'; of hearts that have been changed by the Gospel. The protesting of injustice in the name of Christianity does not mean that we can expect that every motive will be pure nor that every action will be free from excesses, but if action must be taken, redemptive love tells us that Christians have a better chance of not only doing the right thing but doing it for the right reason. Therefore, we must maintain that the most powerful force for social justice remains a clear preaching of the Word of God that will bring men into the Body of Christ and nurture them in Christian living.

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DR. DAVID ALLAN HUBBARD is the President of FTS.

EDITORIAL

O God, who art the Hope of all the ends of the earth, the God of the spirits of all flesh: We beseech Thee to hear our humble intercessions for all races and kindreds of men, that Thou wilt turn all hearts unto Thyself. Remove from our minds hatred, prejudice, and contempt for those who are not of our own race or color, class or creed; that, departing from everything that estranges and divides, we may by Thee be brought into unity of spirit, in the bond of peace. AMEN.

(The Book of Common Worship, The United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, 1946)

L E T

U S

P R A Y

ALMIGHTY God, who hast created man in thine own image; Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil, and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice among men and nations, to the glory of thy Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

(The Book of Common Prayer, Protestant Episcopal Church, 1945)

O GOD our King, who hast called us through Jesus Christ to be kings and priests unto Thee: Teach us to bear one another's burdens and the burdens of the commonwealth. Open our eyes to see the woes of our land, and the despair in the lives of many, and the deep and shameful wrongs that cry out to be put right. Give to us also a vision of our land as thou wouldst have it be, and as thou alone canst fashion it. Make us thy servants, giving us no rest or discharge until thou hast wrought this work of compassion, that generations yet unborn may praise thy Name. We ask this for Jesus Christ's sake. AMEN.

(Service Book and Hymnal, The Lutheran Churches cooperating in The Commission on the Liturgy and Hymnal, 1958)

SOME THOUGHTS ON SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT (continued)

What the Church cannot afford to do is to pursue this primary goal of bringing men to Christ from a position of isolation and retreat into forms which no longer speak to men. The Civil Rights Movement has shown us that a whole segment of American society is now bypassing the Church--the educated Northern Negro. His high priests are Baldwin and Farmer. We can speak to the Negro communities of our land only if we are sensitive to the place where they feel their need the most--social justice.

Dr. R. Kenneth Strachan, writing in the International Review of Missions[1], pointed out the great difficulty that faces the evangelist. There must be a priority in preaching; we do not have the time in brief evangelistic encounters to speak to every area of human need. Yet the need of the hour is to muster the strength to minister to whole men; we must exert more energy than all those who speak to only one facet or another of man's total need. There are three critical reasons why evangelicals must make this additional exertion to be actively sensitive to the needs of society as well as to the needs for the Gospel. Evangelicals must be social leaders if the reins of leadership are to be kept from falling into irresponsible hands. Secondly, evangelical leadership in social needs is necessary to serve as a hedge against an onslaught of the social gospel. Finally, evangelical leadership is vital in furthering the world-wide mission of the church--the greatest obstacle facing missionaries around the world is racial prejudice in America.

A fundamental fact stands out in sharp relief: Christian duty demands of us as citizens in a free society, as heralds of an eternal gospel, nothing less than involvement. Involvement as Christian communities; involvement as individuals. It demands that we move into places where decisions are being made and where lives are being influenced. This might mean joining the local Lions Club, accepting a P.T.A. position, or running for the School Board. Even while involved in the exacting schedule of seminary training it may make demands of you. It must be made clear to responsible Christians that in the desert of desperate social need men's hearts are drying up and becoming hardened. A fresh stream of social concern may be one of the means which the Spirit of God will use to make this ground arable for the Gospel.

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[1] IRM, 53: 209-15, April 1964.

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OUR WONDERFUL RIOT
by The Rev. Ron Ohlson

The other day a friend of mine saw a youth in Watts with a sweat shirt bearing the proud inscription: Participant, First Annual Watts Riot. It bears out the brute fact that, except for middle class Negroes, the citizens of Watts do not view the riots as being nearly as tragic as we do. They are proud of their riot.

Interviewed on the Louis Lomax show, Marquette Fry, whose arrest

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OUR WONDERFUL RIOT (continued)

triggered the riot, said that "Imperial Highway is the main drag across town. People would drive it everyday and never see nothin'. Now, they look!"

This terrible riot, with all its death, destruction and looting, accomplished something great in the eyes of the Negro people. It made the whole nation, the whole world look at the facts and conditions which, up to now, we had succeeded in hiding under the carpet of indifference. It made the whole nation look at a governor who says that "we have no Negro problem in California": look at a mayor who refuses even to go into the area and instead engages in petty political squabbles over who caused it all; look incredulously at a police chief who refers to Negroes as "monkeys" and consistently refuses to allow the formation of a citizen's review board to hear complaints of the people concerning police harassment and brutality: look at the plain, ostensible fact of people forced to live in a ghetto because of their skin color, or the 299,000 families that earn less than $4000 annually and are left to exist on the indignity of the public dole.

So a few people died. It isn't much compared to the auto death toll. For the most part the stores that were destroyed belonged to or were managed by wealthy whites who sat back in their comfortable suburban homes and milked the ghetto with high priced flimsy furniture and overpriced commodities. Who is going to lament the loss of that kind of exploitation?

In a short few hours the riot accomplished more than long years of conferences, symposiums and even picket lines and sit-in demonstrations. It forced indifferent and even liberal whites to show their true colors, to take sides: thousands went out and bought guns. It brought an avalanche of investigators, reporters, and federal interest (including money) which put the white power structure of this city on the hot seat of reality. It literally put Watts on the map. Everyone has heard of Harlem and Chicago's South Side, but until now, who had heard of Watts? Now the world knows where it is, and as the white world flies over it, or drives through it (or around it, which is more probable), that world knows that 'the land of the free and home of the brave' has a problem. Color it black.

Yet the riot brought to the Negro people of Watts something which they desperately need, more than anything else. It brought them an extraordinary sense of dignity. These people are no longer invisible: they exist! They have come alive to loom large in the eyes and conscience of Los Angeles and America. They have to be reckoned with, supported or opposed, but no longer to be pushed aside as we scramble to proclaim to the world the gospel of the American way of life.

Who cares if it is dignity wrought from ashes and blood? It is still a unique sense of dignity brought to a people who have suffered the loss of that sense of dignity at the hands of the white majority for three hundred years. Had we been in the same situation, we might understand: Watts was wonderful.

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The REV. RON OHLSON received his BS at the University of Colorado in 1958, majoring in Psychology. In 1962 he graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary and is now a third year student at Fuller School of Psychology. He is the temporary assistant pastor at Bel-Vue Presbyterian Church in Watts.

"FRIENDLY VISITORS"
by Elizabeth S. Poehlman

Paul and I have been married for 17 months. We already have eight children--plus a mother.

They are "ours" through an assignment by the Friendly Visitors Commission of the Pasadena Council of Churches. We were given our family assignment at the beginning of March 1965 after having worked "unofficially" with them since the previous August.

What is the Friendly Visitors Commission and how did we get involved in its work? The Friendly Visitors Commission is a small group of concerned community people--primarily from the area's churches--who visit and aid destitute families in Pasadena. They supply baby beds and layettes for unfortunate newcomers, hold mothers' clubs for women who have no other social or educational outlet, set up work crews to work with tenants in cooperation with their landlords in fixing up rundown homes, and expand their activities and service as new areas of opportunities or needs present themselves to them.

The Rev. Harley C. Gelhaus, pastor of the Bethany United Church of Christ, is president of the commission. The work's originator and guiding spirit is a retired Quaker school teacher, Mrs. Mara Moser, who is better known to those with whom she works as Sister Mara.

It was Sister Mara who introduced my husband to the work, and it was she who urged him to head a work project of Calvary Baptist Church (Pasadena) young people at the home of what has now become "our" family.

Preliminary work on the project began in August 1964. The last weekend in September and the first in October were our work weekends. We were to scrub and paint the living room and kitchen of the T.house. The place was filthy. It smelled. We all felt uncomfortable when we worked, and headed for the shower when we got home. The work done, we were free to leave and forget. Most of the other young people from the church group did leave, but some of them could not forget. Some of them are now willing to become more deeply involved with the family. Paul and I could not leave even though we found the situation foreign to us and unpleasant. To us there was a greater responsibility than just cleaning up a house and showing a momentary kindness to a fatherless Negro family on relief. (The children, especially, now ranging in age from nine months to 13 years, tugged at our hearts.) We could not leave the job incomplete.

And so, after staying away for a few months because we didn't know how to follow up, Paul decided to go to the home to replace a window we knew would still be broken. While there, he asked Mrs. T. whether we could have a Christmas party there that Saturday. The answer was yes.

That Saturday, six of us took an undecorated tree, some tin foil, red construction paper, dull scissors, paste, pop corn, fruit punch and an armful of inexpensive gifts to the house.

The simple party we shared with the family--making tree decorations, popping pop corn, giving gifts--was an especially meaningful time for Paul and me. Used to plentiful Christmases, we were touched

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"Betsy" is the wife of Paul Poehlman, who was a middler at FTS last year and is now a senior at California Baptist Seminary in West Covina, California.

THE TOUGH ONE

by Dixie Wass

Ben Jacobson guided his boat to the wharf with the care of an oceanliner pilot. He stepped onto the shore and stood tall, pulling his light jacket close to his body to keep out the cooling air of dusk. The jacket showed years of wear and energetic fishing exercise, and his trousers were stained with the blood of many a catch. He was an old man with white kinky hair and his black skin was well weathered by the changing seasons and the sea air.

He flung his day's catch on a nearby rock and emptied the boat of its equipment, then he stopped and stood silently. Rippled ribbons of red streaked across the sky, their colors reflecting on the waters beneath.

Slowly the old Negro picked up his fish and began to clean them. He pulled back the ugly black skins revealing the shiny white meat. As soon as he had thrown the first fish offal into the water, a cast of seagulls appeared as though the smell had penetrated the air of the whole coast and served as their cue to enter. The white birds picked up the skins in their bills and devoured them. Old Ben, amused at their playfulness and loud scolding, hastened his work, fearing they would leave him should he not supply their food quickly.

The cleaning done, he gathered his oars, pole and clean fish and walked slowly toward his small cottage near the shore. He limped, pampering his left leg, and whistled contentedly as he walked.

As he neared the shack, his big collie ran out to greet him and longingly begged for attention. Ben put his gear inside the door, patted the collie playfully and stepped inside. After removing his hat, coat and boots, he opened the cabinet he had built. A few loose sinkers had fallen from their box so he put them, along with his gear, in their places on the shelves.

Satisfied, he closed the cabinet and began preparations for his supper. With paper and wood, he built a fire in the fireplace and the stove, then he washed his hands. Instead of watching the soap lather at the motion of his hands, he gazed out the window and watched the sunset in its final scene as the last ripple of red gave way to the dusk.

From a peg over the sink, he took his mug and from the shelf, his plate and utensils, and set them in their place on the little shelf next to the stove. An old piece of red and white muslin covered the crude wood. At all three windows he had hung pieces of the same cloth for curtains. In the corner opposite the table was a cot covered with an army surplus blanket and an old afghan.

The fireplace was large and black with the soot of many fires. On its mantle Ben had put a piece of driftwood, a few shells and two rocks at either end to decorate a bit.

With the care of a maitre d'hotel, Ben prepared his fish with flour and bread crumbs and

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DIXIE WASS is a graduate of Gordon College and presently an MA candidate at the University of Rhode Island.

put them into the hot frying pan on the stove. He fried potatoes and boiled the fresh peas he had received that morning in trade for yesterday's catch.

Soon the smell of the frying fish and coffee penetrated the air. Ben stopped and took a deep breath, inhaling the welcomed smell of his supper. Then he hurried his work, anxious to sit down and taste it. Happily whistling, Ben poured his coffee and filled his plate, careful to scrape all the crumbs out of the frying pan. Sitting down, he pulled his chair close to the table and bowed his head. "Thanks, Lord, for what I've got. Amen." Then he began to eat.

"Come here, Wandra." He tossed some of the browned fish to his dog. "What did you do all day, huh, Boy?" He ruffled his fur playfully and Wandra rolled over on his back,begging for more. "Did you have a good day here all by yourself? Nice to be alone, ain't it?" The old man finished his fish and settled back in his straight chair and relaxed, sighing and gazing beyond the walls into his lifetime.

"Remember when I first got you, old Boy? It was down New Orleans where you was born and that farmer didn't want you. You was straggly and the ugly one of the litter. But you ain't now!" Old Ben rubbed Wandra's stomach and the dog whined contentedly. "If he could see ya now, he'd want ya,but he cain't have ya, can he, old Boy?" Wandra settled his head on the old Negro's lap.

After a long silence, Ben again gazed off and spoke. "That old farmer didn't want me neither, did he? 'Damned old nigger,' he said, 'You ain't good for nothing. Get out of here and take that....' Remember that? He said I'd been foolin' round his daughter. That's the excuse he gave. Oh, well. . . ." The old man sighed and then smiled. "Now it's just you and me, Wandra, and no one to bother us. Nice, ain't it?"

The old man moved around the cabin, whistling and sometimes singing. The dishes washed and the table tidied, he took his pipe and went out on the porch for a smoke. The moon's reflection played on the waves and the earth was cool and still. Through the silvery blackness, the distant sounds of gulls were heard. Ben settled back in his chair with Wandra at his feet and relaxed.

His thoughts carried him from the memory of New Orleans to South Carolina where he had lived on a plantation for awhile, but left when the grounds and buildings were strangely sabotaged during the night. Ugly screams and cries had frightened the family every night and new destruction had appeared. The family was sure that Ben's being there was the reason, so Ben left. Ben remembered his move to Delaware and how happy he was to be away from the 'nigger-haters."

"Member how glad we was, Wandra, to get away from all that yellin'? Seems good to be settled here where your skin color ain't that much different and yet . . ." He was remembering some of the talk he had heard at the market when he delivered his fish; something about a man being murdered and accusing a Negro for the crime. He hadn't heard the details, but he remembered enough to bother him.

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A few days later, Ben woke in the night, distrubed by Wandra's barking. "What is it, Boy?" he called from the door. "Come on in here!" Thinking he

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was probably playing with a night animal, Ben went back to bed.

He rose the next morning and went out to check his property to see if Wandra had seen something. The sun was beginning to appear over the horizon. Its reflected red glow shimmered on the water. Ben watched the playful seagulls getting their breakfast. They swooped down to the water and returned, mercilessly devouring their black catch. Some of them gathered near his cleaning rock, drawn by the smell that always remained. Even their white bodies could not escape the touch of the sun's red glow. They were bathed in it as they moved about eating. To the left of them, there was another group, the ugly brown and ignorant young birds, also feeding themselves and ignored by the older birds. Ben could easily see them against the white and light brown rocks, and he noticed they kept to themselves.

Ben walked toward the water and stopped. His boat had disappeared. It was not where he had left it at the wharf. He looked from one end of the shore to the other. Then he saw it. It was pushed up on a rocky part of the shore several feet from the wharf. Climbing the rocks to the boat Ben slipped, but recovered his balance. He grabbed the rope. It had been cut. Someone had tried to push his boat out to sea, but the tide was in his favor and had carried it back to the shore. There were only a few small holes from its voyage which Ben easily fixed by noon.

"Why would someone want to lose my boat on me?" Ben petted Wandra. "I don't understand."

The next night Wandra's barking woke Old Ben again. He went outside in time to see a figure in the moonlight moving quickly from the wharf. He broke into a run when Ben shouted, "Hey, there!" Ben chased after him, but his bad leg hindered him. The figure moved out of sight and Ben returned slowly to his cabin.

In the morning he took his catch to the market for trade. While he was selecting his vegetables, he overheard, "Old Ben really ran after him, he told me. Damned old nigger, causin' trouble like that. Ain't got no right to be there anyhow."

There it was again. "Damned old nigger." The old man carefully selected his vegetables and left the market-place.

"Damned old nigger, damned old nigger." The phrase worked over and over in his mind. His steps echoed the rhythm as he walked home. Thoughts of the old New Orleans master, his moves farther and farther north interrupted the rhythm. Wandra ran to meet the old man as he drew near the cabin. "Wandra, the old man in New Orleans hated us, and now . . . Thought we was safe . . . Still ugly black like fish skins or tar stained rocks. Must get that tar stain off the boat, Boy. It's the devil to get off but we gotta keep it clean. He thought I'd dirtied his daughter. 'Damned old nigger,' he said, just like today." Wandra walked beside him, begging now and then for a pet but Old Ben didn't notice. "Well, Boy, we best be getting the fishin' started."

After a long day, the cleaning done and supper finished, Ben relaxed. He sat back, fascinated by the flickering gas lamp that threw moving shadows on the walls before him. The whole room was in the black shade.

"Shadows..." said Ben. "Black shadows . . . . Your shadow's black, Wandra, so's mine. New Orleans master's is black too. His and mine is the same. . . both black. . . light makes

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them that same . . ."

Several days passed without trouble. Ben fished as usual and returned at night to clean his fish. He would watch the big white gulls sweep up the black skins in their devouring beaks and argue over them; or he's watch the young boys, intruding in his private world, as they threw rocks at the brown seagulls. These gulls, inhibited by youth and ignorance, couldn't take flight rapidly. The boys' pranks annoyed Ben but he kept silent.

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"Dirty niggers! Dirty stinkin' niggers, damn them all!" The harsh cry echoed throughout the market-place and Ben inconspicuously hid behind a wagon to see what was going on. A crowd of people had gathered over near the town hall steps on the sidewalk and were listening to the shouting of an angry man. Over to his left, a group held a Negro firmly. "He killed Bob Davidson -- for no reason! Just stabbed him! Are we going to let him go without. . ." His last few words were drowned out by the angry and loud shouting of the crowd.

"Lynch him."

"Kill him, he killed Bob!"

"He deserves to die! Lynch him, lynch him, lynch him."

At that moment, Old Ben felt a heavy hand grab him by the shoulder and jerk him to his feet.

"Hey, fellas! Here's another one!" yelled the man, and then turning to Ben, "Damn you niggers, are you here to murder one of us, too?" The big man began to hit Old Ben hard in the face. After several punches and a mass of vile curses at the old man, he stopped. The man grabbed Ben's shoulders and shook him shouting, "We ought to hang them all. . . . dirty slime, ugly dirty rotten slime." One of the other men came over to the wagon and pulled the big man from Ben.

"Charlie, we're only after Bob's murderer. Now come on and leave him alone." Looking at Ben, he said, "Go on, nigger, go on home and don't come back or there'll be more trouble. One's enough to handle."

Ben walked slowly away, hearing the shouts of the crowd that continued back at the square. His thoughts were jumbled, mixed with fear and anger. Wearily he cried, "Won't this ever end? Why is the white man like that?"

When he returned to the shore he saw several young boys throwing stones, not at the brown gulls as before, but at his boat. He moved as fast as his bad leg would allow and grabbed one of the slower boys by the collar.

"Why are you throwing stones at my boat? It doesn't belong to you. You have no right!"

The boy tried to free himself but Ben's strong grip held him firmly. He didn't know where the strength was coming from when he had been through so much, but he kept his hold. The boy struggled and began shouting to his friends who were far up the beach, walking slowly and turning around frequently to see what was going on. "Help, you guys. Get this nigger off my back! Come on, help me!" He kicked the old man in the shins.

"Dirty old nigger, that's what my Dad calls ya. 'Damned old nigger,' he said." The boy looked up at Ben, screaming his father's words.

"Damned old nigger." There it was again. Old Ben felt his grip loosen, but he didn't care. The boy ran to rejoin his companions far up the beach, but the old man didn't notice. All he heard was the phrase, "damned old nigger, damned old nigger..." In his mind he pictured New

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Orleans, South Carolina, the shouting, the stones, the moves and the running. "We always seem to be runnin', Wandra." Wandra walked with the old man toward the cabin. Standing still for a moment they looked out over the ocean together, watching the gulls search for food.

The ocean seemed more active than usual with white caps contrasting the deep blue water. Ben's eyes wandered from the white caps to his boat, and then to his cleaning rock. Several of the young brown gulls had gathered there with their food and were busily eating. They seemed undisturbed and even content.

Then a loud shrieking pulled the old man's attention to the sky. A large white gull was circling high in the air. Suddenly he swooped down and grabbed some of the food from the brown gulls. He shrieked angrily at them. They didn't hesitate; they left the rock and their uneaten fish to the white gull. Standing on top of the rock, the majestic white bird looked kingly and proud. The sea, the rocks, the fish. . . his domain, the kingdom of the tough one.

"Looks like another move, Wandra, old Boy," said the old man sadly. "Looks like another move."

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FRIENDLY VISITORS continued from page 5

by what we saw that day. In their poverty, a small tree filled with foil and paper trappings, and dollar gifts from the toy store were implements of joy for our little family.

The party was also important because it broke down many barriers between us as Negroes and whites and led to deepening relationships.

Especially significant on that Christmas occasion was the change in attitude of five-year-old L., who on our first trips had pulled away from us and muttered, "Black, white; black, white." In the excitement of the day he forgot his young racial fear and let me hold pieces of a paper chain while he added the paste. Our hands often touched, and he never once drew back.

It was a badly blundered Christmas story which I told that day that gave us a clue to what our newest follow up should be. I was unprepared and rather tongue-tied by the thought of who my audience was. Suddenly, the Christmas story became hard to tell, and I told it poorly. But they loved it and listened to it; and then one asked a question and another told how he had seen the story on television. They were responding, and that's what got Paul and me started in our now weekly story time.

Again, there was a delay of a few months. But soon, fortified with a flannelgraph board, left-over Child Evangelism Magazine flannelgraph materials and paper bag puppets, we went fairly regularly to the house to have a story time with the younger children.

But story times do not interest 12 and 13-year-olds, and so other ways were found to grow in friendship and to gain their confidence so we could reach them in their needs. A bowling outing for the girl was a good start. Two fishing trips with the older boy were fun for him and for Paul, too, who loves any excuse for going fishing. A trip to see "Mary Poppins" was good not only for the oldest boy but for three younger children, too. At that outing we were again thrilled with the five-year-old's responsiveness to the whites he had so much despised and distrusted a few months before.

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During this past summer we watched joyously as the previous relationship of helpers and the helped gradually changed to a relationship of friends. A picnic for the whole family hosted by several of the young people from Calvary Baptist was especially good for the mother. A week-long stay at a Christian camp was an important experience for the oldest girl and a trying one for me as I tried to get her ready for her first stay away from home. A long, heart-to-heart, woman-to-woman talk with Mrs. T. during the Watts riots brought us closer as women and friends. Taking the five and seven-year-olds to Daily Vacation Bible School and teaching one of them there made Paul and the two boys fast friends. (Paul was amused one day when one of L's classmates at Bible school pointed Paul out to one of the other boys: "That's L's father.")

But the turning point in the relationship between us and our family came when Paul and I and one of the girls who planned the picnic were guests in Mrs. T's home for a family dinner in honor of an elderly aunt visiting from Texas. We were the only white people present, but we were welcomed because the word had spread about the help we had given Mrs. T. and the fun we had had together.

And we have started into another year of our work with the family, we are conscious of two things which are key for the months to follow: (1) Since we plan to leave the area this spring it is important for us to find a couple or a family interested in friendship with the family; and (2) we must prayerfully seek a spiritual break-through with the family.

We will be sorry to leave the family, for they now are our good friends. Getting to know them has been an experience in love which has had a significant effect on our plans for service after seminary training.

It has not been an easy experience, for sometimes love is work, and work is often discouraging. As Paul once said as we reviewed our time spent with the family and our delight in each member, "I never thought I'd get this far."

We have. But we have much farther to go before the story ends.

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OUR VISIT IN THE SOUTH

by Eric and Fran Schiller

Last summer Eric and I took part, with 600 others, in a student project under Southern Christian Leadership Conference (S.C.L.C.), headed by Martin Luther King, Jr. The students were of all creeds; they had to believe only in equality and in nonviolence. Our main job was to get Negroes registered to vote. Eric and I were on the eighteen member team from the University of California, Los Angeles, sent to Macon, Georgia, a city of 150,000.

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ERIC and FRAN SCHILLER are FTS alumni. Eric received a BA in Science from the University of Toronto in 1958 and a BD from FTS in 1963. Fran received a BA from Goshen College in 1957 and a MS from Purdue University. They are now at Toronto where Eric is doing graduate work in engineering in preparation for non-professional mission work with college students.

Because we were civil rights workers, we were rejected by the white community almost completely. We received no smiles or greetings on the streets. Instead, we were the objects of angry glares, curses, threats, and even blows. The myth of Southern hospitality exploded before our eyes--when we were with Negroes! Even little children were told not to speak to us.

We soon made the shocking discovery that those who hate "niggers" hate "white niggers" more. One night after a mass meeting with the Negro community, Eric and I, Elaine (a white girl from UCLA) and Pat (the Negro girl in whose home we were living) entered the restaurant part of Po Boy Drive-in. The waiter waited on Pat but ignored us. After twenty minutes, Eric told him that if we didn't get served within the next ten minutes, we would report the drive-in to the civil rights authorities. Still no service, so we walked to the car under silent scrutiny by the customers sitting in their cars and standing around. Three of our tires were flat and Coroky (the fellow who later assulted Eric) said, "Tough luck, ain't it!" The valve stems had been removed.

Eric decided that we three girls should stay in the car while he used the phone at the edge of the drive-in to phone for help. Coroky followed him to the phone booth and demanded why we had brought a "nigger" to a "white" drive-in. As Coroky became more belligerent, another fellow ran up and plunged his arm in the door at Eric. At this point they both began to strike at Eric, who covered his head and doubled up in the nonviolent position. Because they could get at him only from one side, they pulled him out by the leg and inflicted more blows and kicks.

Meanwhile, Pat ran across the street to call for help from a Negro home and I ran about pleading with people to stop the attack. I even called to women, counting on the fairer sex for compassion. But no one in that hideous nightmare would look at me, much less answer me--except one teenager watching from the bumper of his car. He at least answered my plea with, "But I don't know who they are." As I ran toward the booth, Coroky looked as though he was going to slug Eric again. I yelled with all my might, not very nonviolently, "You let him go right now!"

Within the next minute, the other assailant faded away, Eric stood up, and Elaine and I ran up. Two policemen came up right behind us, claiming they hadn't seen a thing. At first Eric decided not to press charges, thinking it might help Coroky change his attitude. But when the Negro help arrived, he was advised to press charges, lest a worse incident occur. (Eric was not seriously injured.)

In Recorder's Court next morning, when Elaine testified, she tried to explain why Eric at first didn't press charges: "Eric is a true Christian and I guess he thought he could convert this fellow if he didn't press charges." At this, the judge sat back in his chair and demanded, "Well now, aren't there enough people in California that need Christianizing? Did he have to come way down here? Why didn't he stay in California?" After hearing Coroky and two buddies testify that Eric had struck first and that Coroky was merely trying to stop the fight, Judge Elliot dismissed the case because of "conflicting evidence" and told Coroky to "leave these people alone."

Upon request from SCLC in Atlanta, we also became involved in Americus, an angry little town seventy miles below Macon. Two Sun-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

days we tried to worship in an integrated group at the First Baptist Church (white Southern Baptist). The first Sunday the five of us were halted halfway up their walk. Eric told their spokesman, Fire Chief Henderson, that he was a Baptist and a born again Christian and that we would like to worship with them. We were told that this was the House of God, that the federal government didn't have a nickel in their church, that we were not welcome and that we were not going one step further. He added that if we've come looking for trouble, violence or bloodshed, we'd get it.

The next Sunday twelve of us returned. John Lewis, young Negro graduate of a Baptist school and chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, was our spokesman. This time Chief Henderson did not say that this was the House of God, but he again reminded us that the federal government didn't have a nickel in their building. When John quietly asked if this were the House of God, the chief retorted, "I'll tell you one more thing, if you don't leave right now, you'll all be arrested!" No one moved, for we were waiting on John to make the first move. But again John very quietly asked, "Would Jesus do that?" Henderson sputtered, "Chief Chambliss, come over here and arrest these people!" Without a word, we got into police cars and were driven to jail. So we sang, prayed and read the Bible in our cells. After 56 hours, we were released on $600 bond each. Our Negro lawyer is trying to get the case moved to the federal court on the grounds that impartial judgment in Americus is impossible. Even the judge at our commitment hearing was a member of the First Baptist Church.

The assault and our imprisonment were of course only a small part of an otherwise relatively peaceful summer, because Macon is somewhat progressive. We trudged red dirt roads and stood on hot street corners to get 2500 Negroes in Macon registered; we taught children in our freedom school and opened a youth center. We held weekly mass meetings with the Negro communities and helped organize literacy and citizenship classes for the adults--always working in teams with Negro youth. But perhaps our greatest impact was summed up by Pat when she told what our coming meant to her: "I got to know white people who really believe that all men are equal."

Why didn't we stay in California? Why didn't Jesus Christ stay in Nazareth? Eric and I went down South in the name of Christ and we're deeply thankful we took the opportunity. Just how serious this tragedy of racial injustice is in "Christian" America will be known only in the annals of history. God forbid that we should be counted in the "thundering silence of the good people."

We'd like to close with the challenge of Dr. Jordan, head of Koinonia Farm, Americus. Because the farm community is integrated and communal, they have suffered severe persecution. Dr. Jordan believes they are called to be a "divine irritant" and bear witness to the sin of segregation. Eric asked him how he found the courage to stay after the community of Americus had used bullets, fire, a bomb, and a 70 car Klan motorcade to scare them out. Jordan replied, "They can't take my life because I've already given it to God."

ONE AUGUST IN LOS ANGELES
by Richard A. Bower

Death and hatred
walked hand in hand
down streets splattered
with men and glass;

Shouts and screams
coming not from mouths
but from the bowels of ignorance,
frustration and despair--
spurting out on the pavement
the blood of hopeless despair--
long-sought-for hope
shattered by persistent indifference.

Death and hatred
walked hand in hand
clouding minds,
perverting hearts.

Will the horror of it all
bring change?
Or will the stench of open sores
cause us to turn away,
stomaches upturned,
calling for someone
to heal the wretched sores--
someone else!

Death and hatred
walk hand in hand,
warmed by neglect,
enflamed by insensible apathy.

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. . . the following poem rather eloquently sums up the plea of thousands of missionaries in many lands as they appeal to the churches in the homeland to realize that what they do and say here is as much of a part of the proclamation of the Gospel--or lack of it--as any missionary's preaching abroad. --Warren Webster

A MISSIONARY'S PLEA
by Ross Coggins

Would God that friends of segregation
For awhile could leave our nation,
Come with me across the seas,
Work by my side with Javanese;
Or, if not here, some other clime
Where Christ is preached--Oh, just one time!

But, lacking means of transmigration
And knowing well the limitation
Of mere words upon a page,
These lines are framed: the world will gauge
The light we lift by darkness driven
From countries whence this light is given.

In times of swift communication,
Nation cannot hide from nation
What it does. Within brief hours
Headlines shout how hatred's powers
Close love's with jarring thud
Because of race, because of blood.

A helpless, dark-skinned boy is slain,
His slayers freed to slay again;
No mark of Cain upon their brow,
They strut in triumph and avow,
"If a nigger is my brother,
Let his keeper be another."

Is there no love that will transcend
Man's petty strife and condescend
To men of other creed and hue?
Forgive! They know not what they do!
Is it too much, we humbly ask--
Unchain our hands to do our task.

* * * * *

ROSS COGGINS is a Southern Baptist missionary to Indonesia. The poem is taken from T. W. Manson, Segregation and Desegregation.

Gayraud S. Wilmore, The Secular Relevance of the Church, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1962. 89pp. ("Christian Perspectives on Social Problems")

In The Secular Relevance of the Church, Gayraud Wilmore speaks to a church which he feels is presently dominated and used by a society no longer oriented toward Christian values. In the more forceful language of Carlyle Marney, "The church is a kept woman on a part-time basis." Although Wilmore is not so categorically harsh, his version of the church's ills, if correct, certainly demonstrates the pitiful loss of her grandeur as the bride of Christ.

In order to explain this loss, Wilmore points first to the ascendancy of "collective action" as the single most powerful tool for changing American social structure. This phenomenon he couples with the realization that "changes in social structure which remove certain barriers to justice and brotherhood may have to precede individual conversions." Since we have organized our society so predominantly in terms of blocs of people, a large part of the church's mission needs to be directed toward affecting these blocs in toto. Wilmore contends that the concept of individual conversion cannot be adequately served unless the church is also willing to prepare the ground by participating in social action on a large scale. In a chapter entitled "The Faithful Use of Power" he shows how the existing denominational structures already have this power, if they will use it. His proposals carefully spell out an avoidance of either a society controlled by the Church or a society alienated from the Church. Instead, we must try to discover the non-Christian movements in our society through which God is working, and ally ourselves toward the common goal.

The methods outlined in the book are relatively incidental, although they might be instructive. At the heart of his argument lies the concept of "collective action." Anyone planning to work within a denomination should apprise himself of the potential which Gayraud Wilmore sees in this organization.

David Garth

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the opinion is published the first Wednesday of each month throughout the school year by students at Fuller Theological Seminary, 135 North Oakland Avenue, Pasadena, California. the opinion welcomes a variety of opinion consistent with general academic standards. Therefore, opinions expressed in articles and letters are those of the authors and are not to be construed as the view of the Seminary, faculty, student council or editors of the opinion.

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